

**Date:** April 22, 2002

**To:** National Wilderness Steering Committee,  
Members and Liaison.

**From:** National Wilderness Steering Committee Chair

**Subject:** Notes From the National Wilderness Steering Committee Meeting 12  
April 16-18, 2002, Point Reyes National Seashore, CA

The following information summarizes issues, decisions, and assignments developed at the NPS National Wilderness Steering Committee (NWSC) meeting held at the headquarters building at Point Reyes National Seashore, California, April 16-18, 2002. (These notes generally follow the NWSC meeting agenda issued March 19, 2002 and are based upon the notes of Jim Walters, Chris Stein, and Dave Spirtes)

**Tuesday, April 16, 2002**

**In Attendance:**

Standing: Denis Davis (joined the meeting April 17), Dave Graber, Wes Henry (via telephone), Dave Morris, Don Neubacher (Chairman), Don Sharlow, Bob Seibert, Gary Somers, Dave Spirtes, Chris Stein, Steve Ulvi, Jim Walters.

Absent: Dick Ring

Liaison: Connie Myers. Director, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center  
Dave Parsons, Director, Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.  
Bill Schmidt, WASO, Natural Resources Stewardship and Science.  
Rick Potts, NPS Representative at ACNWTC (via telephone)

Guests: Jim Shevock, ARD – Resources and Science, PWRO  
Rich Harris, WASO, GPRA Office.  
Howard Wilshire, Chairman of the Board. Public Employees for  
Environmental Responsibility (PEER)  
John Dell’ Osso, Chief. Division of Interpretation, PORE

**Welcome and Introductory Comments from Don Nuebacher. Committee Chairperson:**

-Conducted a brief round of introductions and emphasized working nature of the meeting agenda.

-Interpretive presentation on Point Reyes National Seashore by John Dell Osso.

1. **Talk by Howard Wilshire, Chairman of the Board, PEER.** Dr. Wilshire distributed information and reviewed a list of concerns PEER has with the NPS wilderness program. (This information is included in a memo, dated April 5, 2002 entitled: "Background for Presentation to NPS Wilderness Steering Committee." The memo is on file at the Deputy Wilderness Program Coordinator's office.) The memo references eight NPS wilderness program "oversights" including: (1) the lack of required legal descriptions and maps, (2) the need to convert "potential" wilderness to "designated" wilderness, (3) the need to complete required wilderness suitability studies, (4) the need to study lands added to the NPS, (5) the need to restudy areas originally recommended as non-suitable for wilderness, (6) the review of areas with zero suitable acres, (7) follow-up with wilderness recommendations which have not been submitted, and (8) NPS inattention to existing wilderness.

**Outcome:** Information to the NWSC and as possible reference in briefing statements for the NPS Directorate.

2. **Status Reports From WASO Wilderness Program Coordinator** (Wes Henry, via telephone)

- a. **Pinchot Wilderness Stewardship Report entitled: "Ensuring the Stewardship of the National Wilderness Preservation System,"** by the Wilderness Stewardship Panel Chaired by Dr. Perry Brown.

The above report has been completed by the Pinchot Institute and was formally presented to the wilderness agency directorate on March 28. (It was subsequently learned that none of the agency Directors attended this presentation. Dick Ring represented the NPS at the March 28th meeting.) The report is available on the net at [www.wilderness.net/specialreports/brown/](http://www.wilderness.net/specialreports/brown/)

**Outcome:** The Interagency Wilderness Policy Council will discuss the possibilities for presenting the report to the agency Directorate and/or the Secretary's offices as well as further implementation strategies. Wes Henry will follow-up with Dick Ring to ensure this issue is an agenda item at the Interagency Wilderness Policy Council meeting scheduled for April 26, 2002.

Appropriate 2004 PMIS funding requests will be prepared as instructed by the NPS Directorate.

b. **Status of the NPS Wilderness Education Plan.** The Wilderness Education Plan

(WEP) is currently undergoing final editing and should be completed within the next two weeks.

**Outcome:** As soon as the final version of the document is ready, Wes Henry will send the plan to Dick Ring for final signature. The plan will subsequently be “rolled out” via a cover letter from the ARD-Operations and sent to all wilderness parks, park wilderness program coordinators, park interpreters, etc. Wes will explore how many copies of the plan need to be reproduced and how/when this can be funded. Chris Stein will also contact NPS interpreters to inform them about the nature of the WEP and ensure that the availability of this document is widely disseminated. Jim Walters will post related information on the NPS wilderness bulletin board.

c. **Program Reporting and Database Development** Progress has been slowed due to technical problems and the health of the WASO Wilderness Program Coordinator. None-the-less, progress is being made and should allow for full operation of an integrated network information system in the near future.

**Outcome:** Wes Henry will continue efforts to have the NPS wilderness web site fully operational and available to park managers as soon as practical. He has contracted with Gregg Kroll to assist in training and in putting the database together, and Chris Marvel, the Intermountain Intranet guru will develop a more user-friendly shell for the site.

d. **Revision of RM/DO 41.** Wes Henry had electronically mailed a copy of a draft memo from the ADO to the Regional Directors entitled: “Clarifying the Wilderness Review Process” to NWSC members. This memo will be issued through the WASO Office of the Solicitor. It’s purpose is to explain and clarify the “wilderness suitability assessment” and “wilderness suitability study” processes and how they may be interfaced with the GMP process.

**Outcome:** After discussion, the NWSC recommended that the draft memo be forwarded to the Solicitor’s office for review and comment. Pending finalization, the memo will be issued from the Associate Director’s office for inclusion in RM 41. The substance of the memo will also be included in the next revision of Director’s Order #41: Wilderness Preservation and Management. (The revision is scheduled for 2004). Wes Henry to coordinate this effort.

- e. **Status of Website and Toolbox Development.** (Same as “c” above; included in the wilderness website).
- f. **Report on Wilderness Policy Council.** Dick Ring will attend the April 26 meeting of the Wilderness Policy Council Meeting. The Council will hear presentations from Dave Parsons (Leopold Institute) and Connie Myers (Carhart Training Center) in the morning and then discuss recommendations and priorities related to the Pinchot Report. Categories of discussion will include education, science/monitoring, managing wilderness as a system, and accountability.

**Outcome:** Dick Ring will attend the Policy Council Meeting.

- g. **Wilderness Accessibility Issue.** No new information available on issue.

### 3. **Progress Report from the Deputy Wilderness Program Coordinator.**

- a. **Wilderness Management Planning Subcommittee Report.** Jim Walters briefly reviewed a mock-up version of the proposed wilderness management plan template with the Committee. The draft document has been reformatted to respond to Committee suggestions that the document needed to be brief, instructional, and provide examples as necessary to illustrate various components of a wilderness management plan. He estimated that the new draft should be completed and be available for initial in-Service review by June 2002.

**Outcome:** Walters will continue working with the wilderness plan template sub-committee (Steve Ulvi, Judy Alderson, Ruth Scott, Jim Hammett, Jim Walters) to complete the draft plan and put the document out for review, including Jake Hooglands office, by June 2002. Pending the receipt of review comments, the document will be converted to a CD format for distribution to parks.

- b. **Selection of the Year 2001 Wilderness Award Winner.** Jim Walters reported that since the original call for nominations had been delayed at WASO, a new call was issued in early April with a due date for nominations by May 30.

**Outcome:** Upon receipt of the nominations, Jim Walters will submit all nominations to the NWSC for their review and recommendations for the award category winners. Selection of the Year 2001 award winners should be completed by June 30. Don Neubacher will organize a conference call to

discuss nominations, as necessary. An appropriate venue for the award presentations will then need to be arranged.

- c. **Report on the Intermountain Region Workshop.** Jim Walters summarized the events of the initial meeting of the Intermountain Region Wilderness Executive Committee which took place in Denver, CO on February 28, 2002. The Charter for the IMR-WEC, the 180-Day Wilderness Action Plan, and other information pertinent to the IMR wilderness initiative are posted on the IMR intra-net website at: <http://im.den.nps.gov/> (Click on the little brown square next to “Ranger Activities,” on the left side menu, then click on “Wilderness.”)

**Outcome:** Information to the NWSC and any other Region who might wish to adopt elements of Regional Director Wade’s wilderness initiative.

#### **4. Report from the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.**

Director Connie Myers showed the NWSC a video “promo” which could possibly be used by the various media to solicit donations for the Carhart Center. The video could also be used for external and internal training purposes and was in “rough draft” format only.

Connie also gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the FY-03 funding shortfalls at the Carhart Center and her intended request for funding to address these shortfalls. Her intention was to present this same program at the April 26, 2002 Interagency Wilderness Policy Council Meeting.

**Outcome:** The NWSC strongly supports wilderness.net and the effectiveness of the educational efforts of the Center. The NWSC further recognizes the need for all four wilderness agencies to provide their share of funding support to the Center. The Committee will review the OFS base-funding request prepared by Connie Myers. Don Neubacher will discuss FY-03 budget shortfalls at the Center with Dick Ring.

#### **5. Report from the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.**

Dave Parsons discussed:

- The April 2003 George Wright Society Conference. A call for papers will be issued in August, 2002.
- Review of ALWRI staff activities including: Cole: working on “decision and restricting use” (including day use) paper. Landrus: wilderness monitoring and fish stocking issues, Corn:

amphibian research, Miller: national fire programs, Wright: wilderness applications/public relations.

-OFS budget submittals for National Learning Centers and Monitoring and Evaluations Projects. (distributed a draft paper entitled: “A Proposal for Developing a Protocol to Monitor and Evaluate Trends in Wilderness Character.”)

-A discussion concerning a brief history of former Secretary of the Interior Babbitt and CESU’s

**Outcome:** The NWSC reaffirms its support of the interagency MOU establishing the ALWRI and the OFS funding submission supporting NPS involvement in the Institute. Don Neubacher will work with Dave Parsons to identify potential NPS funding sources and to develop funding request. The NWSC will insure that information generated by the Institute is appropriately distributed to wilderness managers.

**6. Status of Wilderness GPRA Goal(s) Initiative.** Rick Harris reviewed the draft Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goal which had been developed after three previously submitted wilderness goals were rejected by the WASO Office of Strategic Planning. The current goal focuses on measuring NPS wilderness performance/results based upon the completion of required wilderness management plans.

**Outcome:** The NWSC approved the draft GPRA goal essentially as written. Rick Harris, as part of the Performance Management Council, will present the goal, supported by the NWSC discussion, to the NPS National Leadership Council meeting in San Diego this same week. While it is recognized that this goal is not an “outcome” the NWSC recommended that it be adopted until better performance measures can be developed for wilderness resources.

**7. Cultural Resources and Wilderness.** Gary Somers reviewed the “White Paper” he’d written entitled: Cultural Resources and Wilderness. The NWSC discussed the paper and made editorial suggestions for the paper.

**Outcome:** Gary Somers will re-do the paper to reflect Committee suggestions. Committee members need to provide Gary with other editorial comments and examples of conflicts between the cultural resource and wilderness programs as soon as possible. Don Nuebacher will forward the white paper to the Director as soon as it is finalized. It was also suggested, and approved, that the Committee “white papers” should be presented in a standard “findings” format. The Committee will use the organization of the cultural resource paper as a standard format for its products.

**Evening Session:** A Program on “Vanishing Soundscapes” was presented by Dr. Bernie Krause at the PORE Morgan Horse Farm interpretive facility. Information on Dr. Krause’s

program is available at: <http://www.wildsanctuary.com> Dr. Krause's e-mail: [chirp@wildsanctuary.com](mailto:chirp@wildsanctuary.com)

**Wednesday, April 17, 2002**

**A.M. Field Trip:** Tour to Limantour Beach to discuss/observe PORE wilderness resource monitoring (elk and small mammal survey) activities. Members of the park staff were available to discuss the nature of their monitoring efforts and the implications of this work to wilderness resources. (A beautiful sunny day at PORE with sightings of grey whales heading towards Drakes Bay on their northern migration route.)

**8. Progress Report: Natural Resources Subcommittee.** Dave Graber discussed his position paper entitled: "Conservation Activities in Wilderness." The NWSC engaged in considerable discussion over the issue of ecological restoration projects within wilderness and the on-going debate about "wild" versus "natural" as a wilderness management principle.

**Outcome:** The NWSC recommended that Dave Graber re-work his paper to integrate the comments of the Committee and those generated by the staff at the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute. Dave Parson will develop a treatment on the "wild" versus "natural" issue to assist in this overall discussion. Committee members need to provide thoughts and comments on these issues to Parson and Graber by May 15 with a final draft due June 30.

In keeping with the need to codify Committee recommendations, Don Neubacher will ask Deputy Director Randy Jones on advice about the most effective ways to implement NWSC "findings."

**9. Status of the NPS Minimum Requirement Initiative.** Jim Walters reviewed the findings of a white paper entitled: "Applying 'Minimum Requirement' Within National Park Service Wilderness." This paper summarized the factors affecting the implementation of minimum requirement protocols within the NPS and the results of a brief survey among NPS wilderness managers asking them for comments on the minimum requirement issue.

Rick Potts reported that the minimum requirement template developed by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center was essentially complete, but would probably always require constant "tweaking" to make it applicable to the variety of situations to be tested.

**Outcome:** Upon receipt of the "final" version of the minimum requirement template, Jim Walters will develop a cover memo from the Associate Director to Regional Director's, superintendents, etc., stating that the Carhart template will serve as the basic format for all NPS minimum requirement assessments until such time as parks complete their required

wilderness management plans-- which must include an acceptable minimum requirement system. Walters and Henry will also work with appropriate regional and WASO staff to insure that minimum requirement is integrated into all compliance checklists.

**10. Status of the Annual Report To Congress.** Wes Henry reported on his progress in developing and distributing an NPS Report to Congress. The other wilderness agencies apparently expressed only mild interest in a joint report or did not want to be included in such a joint report. The Committee reviewed the notes of the October, 2001 NWSC meeting which affirmed any Report to Congress should be as concise as possible--no more than 10 pages total, and include accomplishments, values, resource inventory, etc.

**Outcome:** Wes Henry, Don Neubacher, and Jim Walters will be responsible for developing an NPS wilderness report for the Director which can be subsequently forwarded to the Congress as needed to fulfill Section 7 requirements of the Wilderness Act. Wes and Don will forward the text of the report to the staff of Point Reyes NS for layout and graphics by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Wes will arrange to have appropriate copies printed.

## **11. New Business**

- a. Cumberland Island Wilderness Lawsuit Status.** Jim Walters reported that a request for an injunction to stop the NPS from using vehicles to transport visitors through the designated wilderness is still pending.
- b. Grand Canyon Wilderness Planning Lawsuit.** Jim Walters reported that the lawsuit challenging the NPS decision to stop the Colorado River Management Plan and put the park wilderness management plan in abeyance was settled under the terms of a court ordered Settlement Agreement signed by all parties in January, 2002. Under the terms of the agreement, the park will re-engage itself in the planning process for the Colorado River and have a completed document by December 31, 2004. The park staff fully expects to integrate the fact of parks extensive wilderness resource into the planning process.
- c. Natural Resource Advisory Group Coordination.** Bill Schmidt reported that he has tried several times to communicate the need for better coordination and cooperation between the NRAG and the NWSC including extending an invitation for an NRAG member to join the NWSC. There has been little response from the NRAG membership.

**Outcome:** Don Neubacher will be WASO next week and will specifically contact the NRAG membership to invite participation in the NWSC, at least, on an "at large" basis. Don and Wes Henry will, correspondingly attempt to sent a NWSC member (to be named later) to the NRAG meetings.



- d. **Update on the Alaska Wilderness Stewardship Plan Strategy.** Steve Ulvi reported that the Denali NP backcountry management plan has run into controversy relating to the use of snowmobiles and aircraft overflights. The park has been cautioned by DOI to abide by the administration's 4 "C's" initiative (Cooperation, Communication, Consultation, and Conservation). Pending the completing of the Denali plan, Glacier Bay and Wrangle Saint Elias and Gates of the Arctic will begin their respective plans. Alaska will need help in determining appropriate social indicators for their zoning schemes.
- e. **Update on George Wright Society Conference.** Dave Parsons again briefed the group on the April 14-18, 2003 conference in San Diego, California. The conference will have a strong cultural resource theme. The NWSC needs to attend and participate in a variety of venues--possibly a restoration panel? Other issues to consider include the Bandelier restoration project, and the status of the NPS wilderness inventory,

**Outcome:** Rick Potts will serve as NWSC liaison for the GWS conference.

- f. **Follow-Up to the Pinchot Report.** Don Neubacher led a group discussion as to how the NWSC should respond to the Pinchot Report, i.e., does the group want/need to respond to this document? Wes Henry said that Randy Jones and the NLC would receive a briefing package on the report from Dick Ring. The Committee also needs to consider that Warren Brown's office confirmed the possibility of funding support for wilderness plans to help meet GPRA goals, etc.

**Outcome:** Members should send suggestions and ideas for an appropriate response to Wes Henry and Don Neubacher as soon as possible. Any formal response from the Committee should include support for the "training" recommendations within the document and reference the need for continued support of the Carhart Training Center.

#### **Thursday, April 18, 2002 (continue New Business)**

- g. **Report on USFS Wilderness Monitoring Committee.** Denis Davis reported on his attendance at this meeting for the past two days. He distributed copies of documents entitled: "A Framework for Wilderness Inventory and Monitoring" and "Developing a Protocol to Monitor and Evaluate Trends in Wilderness Character" as background information on the purposes of the meeting.
- h. **Possibility of an Interagency Wilderness Conference.** In a follow-up discussion to the USFS Monitoring Committee report, the NWSC considered the possibilities of the four wilderness agencies holding a joint meeting/conference in order to advance

communication and cooperation. The membership generally felt that this was a good idea.

**Outcome:** Denis Davis will put together a list of ideas/topics for an interagency conference and submit this list to the membership. The list will include ideas for incorporating elements of the Pinchot Report.

- i. **OFS Budget Submissions.** Wes Henry reported that he was instructed by the Associate Director to put together several OFS funding requests which reflect a reasoned response to both NWSC programs and elements of the Pinchot Report. The Committee discussed possible programs to be funded under the OFS budget program and recommended the following priorities for the NPS submission: (1) planning, (2) education/training (stressing information and communication), and (3) inventorying and monitoring (research)

**Outcome:** Wes Henry, Connie Myers, and Dave Parsons were tasked with generating the OFS budget request submissions in time for Wes to present a package to the Associate Director – Operations and Education to be presented at the Wilderness Policy Council Meeting April 26, 2002.

- j. **Possibility of Identifying an “At Large” Representative for Submerged Wilderness Resources.** Jim Walters suggested the possibility of adding a representative for submerged wilderness resources to the “at large” Committee list. He reminded the group that the NPS contained a considerable inventory of underwater wilderness resource areas and suggested a representative for the Submerged Resource Center be identified as a subject resource.

**Outcome:** After discussion, the NWSC determined that, since there was currently no major issues with submerged wilderness, and since the membership was already at a sizable number, the identification of this subject specialty on the Committee should be deferred.

## 12. Date, Location, and Scope of Next NWSC Meeting.

The Committee agreed that the NWSC should plan to meet at or near WASO and should include the Director, other agency representatives, appropriate NGO's, etc. The next NWSC meeting is scheduled for October 29,30,31, 2002

**Adjournment: 11:00 a.m. Thursday, April 18, 2002**

